

THE UPPER LAKES, OR "INLAND SEA," OF AMERICA.

This appellation applies to Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior, including Green Bay, lying within the confines of the United States, and Georgian Bay, which lies entirely in Canada.

These bodies of water embrace an area of about 75,000 square miles, and, as a whole, are deserving of the name of the 'INLAND SEA,' being closely connected by straits or water-courses, navigable for the largest class of steamers or sail vessels. The shores, although not elevated, are bold, and free from marsh or swampy lands, presenting one clean range of coast for about 3,000 miles.

By a late decision of the Supreme Court of the U. States, the Upper Lakes including Lake Erie, with their connecting waters, were declared to be seas, commercially and legally. Congress, under this decision, is empowered to improve the harbors of the lakes and the connecting straits, precisely as it has power to do the same on the seaboard. This will probably lead to a vigorous policy in the maintenance of Federal authority, both in improving the harbors, and making provision for the safety of commerce, and protection of life, as well as guarding against foreign invasion. The only fortification of importance that is garrisoned is *Fort Mackinac*, guarding the passage through the Straits of Mackinac.

The islands of these lakes are numerous, particularly in the Straits of Mackinac, and in Georgian Bay, retaining the same bold and virgin appearance as the mainland; most of them are fertile and susceptible of high cultivation, although, as yet, but few are inhabited to any considerable extent.

The dark green waters of the Upper Lakes, when agitated by a storm, or the motion of a passing steamer, presents a brilliancy peculiar only to these transparent waters—they then assume the admixture of white foam, with a lively green tinge, assuming a crystal-like appearance. In this pure water, the *white fish*, and other species of the finny tribe, delight to gambol, affording the sportsman and epicurean untold pleasure, which is well described in the following poem:

THE WHITE FISH.

HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT, in his poem.

"THE WHITE FISH," says:

"All friends to good living by tureen and dish,
Concur in exulting this prince of a fish;
So fine in a platter, so tempting a fry,
So rich on a gridiron, so sweet in a pie;
That even before it the salmon must fall,
And that mighty *bonne-bouche*, of the land-
beaver's tail.

"'Tis a morsel alike for the gourmand or fastier,
White, white as a tablet of pure alabaster;
Its beauty or flavor no person can doubt,
When seen in the water or tasted without;
And all the disputes that opinion ere makes
Of this king of lake fishes, this *dear of the
Lakes*,"

Regard not its choiceness to ponder or sup,
But the best mode of dressing and serving it up.

Here too, might a fancy to descent inclined,
Contemplate the love that pertains to the kind,
And bring up the red man, in fencible strains,
To prove its creation from feminine brains."

* A translation of *Ad-dik-koom-maig*, the Indian name for this fish.

† *Vide* "Indian Tales and Legends."